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ABSTRACT

Communication, particularly in the form of self-disclosure or emotional expressiveness is important to happy, healthy relationships. Differences in emotional expressiveness between sexes, between socioeconomic groups, and within each of these groups were examined in 48 males and 44 females from high and low socioeconomic (SES) groups. Subjects completed the Emotional Expressiveness Scale, answering questions about love, anger, happiness, and sadness; they also designated the target person to whom these emotions were directed by checking responses for people, spouse, or child. The results indicated that females from both SES groups were more expressive in the emotions of happiness and sadness. High SES females appeared to be the most expressive of all groups. Individuals in the high SES group were significantly more expressive of anger to people and to their spouses, and more expressive of sadness to spouses than were low SES indiriduals. Low SES females were more expressive of happiness to people than were high SES males. All groups exhibited significantly greater expression of all emotions, except anger, to family members than to non-family members. Males exhibited more expressiveness to spouse than to child, whereas females did not differ significantly in the expression of love between spouse and child. (The Emotional Expessiveness Scale is appended.) (NRB)



FAMILY EXPRESSIVENESS: SEX AND SOCIOECONOMIC CLASS DIFFERENCES

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FAMILY EXPRESSIVENESS: SEX AND SOCIOECONOMIC CLASS DIFFERENCES

Emotional expressiveness and self disclosure are similar types of communication. Both processes involve the revealing of something about oneself to another and both can be communicated at varying levels (Altman and Taylor, 1973; Derlega and Chaikin, 1975). When one's level of self disclosure and intimacy are very high the relationship becomes a more personal one. This sharing of oneself, of one's feelings and secrets is important to the development of trust in a relationship (Simmel, 1950).

Communication, particularly in the form of self disclosure or emotional expressiveness is important to happy, healthy relationships. Self disclosure and emotional expressiveness serve to promote intimacy and distinguish between personal and impersonal interactions. Many researchers note that communication is vital in coping with difficulties or problems in a marriage relationship (Levinger and Senn, 1967; Navran, 1967).

Emotional expressiveness appears to be a sex related characteristic. The literature indicates that females are more emotionally expressive than males (Balswick and Averett, 1977). It appears that females are socialized toward more expressive behavior, whereas males are socialized toward more instrumental behavior (Basow, 1980; Chafetz, 1974). This difference in socialization of males and females may cause communication difficulties



within an intimate relationship. Liberation movements, of course, may be bringing about changes in the traditional female and male behaviors.

Cultural differences in emotional expressiveness have also been noted in the literature (Komarovsky, 1964; and Ingoldsby, 1980). It seems that expressiveness, self disclosure, and marital communication are greater for individuals of higher socioeconomic groups than those of the lower socioeconomic groups. Little research has been done concerning the types of emotions expressed and target persons (i.e., family or non-family members) of that expressiveness, particularly in relation to cultural differences.

The present research was designed to determine differences in emotional expressiveness between sexes, between socioeconomic groups and within each of these groups. The hypotheses to be evaluated are as follows:

- 1. Females are more emotionally expressive than males.
- 2. High socioeconomic status persons are more emotionally expressive than are low socioeconomic status persons.
- 3. Low socioeconomic status persons are more emotionally expressive outside of their families than they are within.

 High socioeconomic status persons are more emotionally expressive within their families than they are outside of their families.

The Sample

The sample in this study consisted of a total of 92 individuals from the Cleveland area: 48 males and 44 females. In the high socioeconomic groups there were 25 females and 29 males. The low SES groups contained 19 males and 19 females. Age ranges were from age 26 to 57 years for the females and 28 to 57 years for the males.



The Hollingshead Two Factor Index of Social Position was employed to determine the socioeconomic status of the subjects. Categories I and II were collapsed for high socioeconomic status and categories III, IV, and V were pooled to designate low socioeconomic status.

Instrumentation

The Emotional Expressiveness Scale (see Appendix) in an expanded form to include expressiveness to spouse and to children in addition to people was the instrument employed in this study (Ingoldsby, 1980).

The Emotional Expressiveness Scale is a 16 item Likert type questionnaire with response categories of never, seldom, often and very often. Balswick's (1977) factor analysis indicated that there were four different types of emotion, measured by four items each: Love (love, tenderness, affection, and warmth), Anger (Hate, anger, rage, and resentment), Sadness (sorrow, grief, sad, and blue), and Happiness (joy, elation, happy, and delight). Ingoldsby (1980) also factor analyzed his results, arriving at the same four factors—love, anger, sadness, happiness.

The reliability of the scale has been well established through numerous uses with similar results. Factor loadings of love--17 percent of variance, anger--13 percent, sadness--12.9 percent, and happiness--16.? percent demonstrated the content validity by suggesting that the four items which constitute the four dimensions of emotions do measure some variation of that emotion.

Analysis of the Data

To determine whether there were significant differences across and/or within groups in the types of emotional expressiveness exhibited t-tests were employed. The subjects were divided into four subgroups: high socioeconomic status males, high socioeconomic status females,



low socioeconomic status males, and low socioeconomic status females.

There were four distinct emotions (love, anger, happiness, and sadness) about which each of the subgroups were questioned. The subjects were also asked to designate the target person to whom the emotions were directed by checking never, seldom, often, or very often for people, spouse, or child.

Across group variations were found by comparing the differences in types of emotions expressed between each of the four groups and differences in the target persons of that expressiveness. Each subgroup was compared to the others to determine differences in the amount of expressiveness indicated for love to people, love to spouse, and love to child and so forth for each emotion.

T-tests were additionally performed within the subgroups to ascertain whether or not certain groups were more expressive of any of all the emotions to family members (spouse and/or child) or non-family members (people). Subgroup comparisons were made to determine whether or not love was expressed more often to people, to spouse or to child; anger was expressed more often to people, to spouse or to child; happiness was expressed more often to people, to spouse, or to child; and whether or not sadness was expressed more often to people, spouse, or child.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Hypothesis 1: Females are more emotionally expressive than are males.

This was partially supported by the present research. Females exhibited greater expression of happiness to non family than did males of this study.

The females also expressed sadness more often to people and to their children than did the males (see Table 1). Further subdivision of the



results supports the above and reveals some interesting differences in expressiveness.

- a) High socioeconomic status females expressed sadness more often to people and to their children than did high socioeconomic status males.
- b) Low socioeconomic status females express happiness more often to people than do high socioeconomic status males.
- c) High socioeconomic status females are more expressive of love to children than are low socioeconomic status males.
- d) High socioeconomic status females exhibit greater expression of anger to people and to spouse than do low socioeconomic males.
- e) High socioeconomic status females are more expressive of happiness to people than are low socioeconomic status males.
- f) High socioeconomic status females are more expressive of sadness to people, to spouses, and to their children than are low socioeconomic status males.
- g) Low socioeconomic status females express happiness more often to people than do low socioeconomic status males.

The results indicate that females from both socioeconomic groups are more expressive in Only two emotions—happiness and sadness. Apparently, the high SES temales are the most expressive of all four groups. They are particularly more emotionally expressive than low SES males—in addition to happiness and sadness, high SES females exhibited greater expression of love and anger than did low SES males. These results are supported in the literature by Ingoldsby's (1980) comparision of expressiveness between U.S. and Colombian samples. In that study, the U.S. females



(who correspond with high SES females in the present research) demonstrated greater expressiveness than either the U.S. males or the Colombian males and females.

Balswick and Avertt (1977) found that the females of their sample were more expressive of love than were the males, in addition to happiness and sadness. A possible explanation for the lack of significance found in the present study may be that the expressions of love and anger are not viewed by men as unmasculine. Expression of love to one's wife may especially be thought of as appropriate. It might also be proposed that men and society are altering their opinions of masculinity and permitting or encouraging more expressiveness among men. Perhaps the emerging emphasis placed on communication of feelings and the importance of father nurturance is beginning to evidence itself in the males of the 1980s.

According to sex role stereotyping literature (Basow, 1980, Chafetz, 1974), it is not surprising that females exhibit greater expressiveness in the emotions of happiness and sadness, particularly in relation to people (non family members) and to children. Males have been socialized for generations to control their emotions—expecially if they involved tears—through parental expectations (i.e., "Big boys don't cry") and, more recently, through the media. Men of both high and low socioeconomic groups appear to feel uncomfortable with the open expression of happiness to people other than immediate family members. The expression of sadness by males has not been, until very recently, endorsed or encouraged by society and even now it depends upon a number of factors including time, place, target person, educational, and occupational status. Although, from the



present research it seems possible to propose a general increase in the male expression of love, there is also continued support for the contention that men are traditionally oriented to less emotionally expressive behaviors than are women.

Hypothesis 2: High SES individuals are more emotionally expressive than are low SES individuals.

Results providing support for this hypothesis were again only partial. Individuals designated as high SES were significantly more expressive of anger to people and to their spouses; and more expressive of sadness to spouse than those defined as low SES persons (see Table 2).

The only case where low SES individuals were more expressive than high SES was in the expression of happiness to people. Here low SES females are more expressive than high SES males.

From the results it seems justifiable to suggest that high socioeconomic status individuals feel more comfortable expressing negative
emotions (anger and sadness) to their spouses than do low SES individuals.
Komarovsky's (1964) class study of blue collar marital relationships
lends some support to this conclusion. Her research revealed that low
SES men were unlikely to discuss personal problems or economic worries
with their spouses. In many cases the wives also were rejuctant to bring
up any of their private thoughts, dreams, worries, or problems to their
husbands. Husbands and wives in Komarovsky's study appeared to expect a more
traditional form of marriage, where male and female roles are clearly
delineated and emotional intimacy is a low priority, if wanted at all.
The individuals tended to feel that their spouses would not be interested
in or approve of the increased communication within their marriages.

As we noted under the discussion of hypothesis number one, high SES females appear to be the most emotionally expressive of all four groups.



In particular, high SES females exhibited greater expression of love, anger, happiness, and sadness to at least one target individual than did the low SES men. This can, no doubt, be partially attributed to the sex difference. Only one difference was found in emotional expressiveness between low SES females and low SES males which was happiness to people. Therefore, it seems quite plausible to surmise that differences in socioeconomic status as well as sex differences accounted for the larger number of disparities in types and target persons or expressiveness between the high SES females and low SES males.

The lack of significant differences found in the expressions of love and happiness between socioeconomic groups is contradictory to the literature. Komarovsky's research indicated no specific areas or emotions in which low SES persons demonstrated increased expressiveness. From the present research it seems possible to infer a change occurring in the values, expectations and needs of the lower socioeconomic status person. Members of this group are apparently becoming more like what has been typically thought of as middle class.

Expressiveness within the marriage relationship is becoming increasingly acceptable and desirable for males and females of both high and low socio-economic groups. The same societal influences that appear to be encouraging increases in male expressive behavior may also be contributing to the changes in types and levels of expressiveness between and within socioeconomic groups. Because there is such a small amount of research available pertaining to expressiveness within and across socioeconomic classes, it is difficult to know whether the results presented here are due to a real change or some problems with the sampling. Regardless of the cause, it remains an interesting phenomen and one that deserves further investigation.



Hypothesis 3: Low socioeconomic status persons are more emotionally expressive outside of their families than they are within; high socioeconomic status persons are more emotionally expressive within their families than they are outside of their families.

In this study low SES persons were not found to be more expressive outside of their families. The results indicated that both the low and high SES groups exhibited significantly greater expression of all four emotions except anger, to family members than to non-family members (Table 3).

When comparing the means within the subgroups for each emotion, numerous significant differences are obtained (see Table 4). The nonsignificant results are noteworthy because of the pattern they take. In the positive emotions of love and happiness, nonsignificant differences are found between spouse and child for all subgroups with two exceptions: low SES males are more expressive of love to their spouse than to their child; and high SES males are more expressive of happiness to spouse than to child. The individuals of this study appear to feel it is appropriate to express positive emotions within their families at about an equal level.

Nonsignificant results for the negative emotions (anger and sadness) are found between people and child. There are no significant differences in the expression of anger between people and child for any subgroup. Low SES males and females exhibited no significant difference in expression of sadness to people or child, but high SFS males and females were more expressive to child than to people. Generally, it appears that negative emotions are expressed most to spouses, although the high SES may be somewhat more expressive to their children than are the low SES.

The means for the expression of love and happiness to spouse and to children are fairly high for both socioeconomic groups, indicating that these emotions are expressed OFTEN or VERY OFTEN a greater number of



times than SELDOM or NEVER. Anger and sadness appear from the means to be the least expressed emotions, especially when expressed to people (non-family members). Low SES and high SES individuals seem to feel more comfortable expressing negative emotions within their families (to spouses).

The low SES persons in this study do not follow what the literature reveals as a typical mode of family expressiveness. This was apparent in the discussion of hypothesis number two, where low SES persons were not significantly less expressive of the emotions love and happiness.

Komarovsky's study of blue collar marriages in the early 1960s demonstrated that emotional expressiveness within the family was quite low, but that males and females tended to relate many of their thoughts and feelings to friends, mothers, sisters, or fathers and brothers. Many of the couples in Komarovsky's study seemed to feel that self disclosure and emotional expressiveness were unnecessary in marriage. Based upon middle class view of marriage, Komarovsky stated that "if it is one of the functions of modern marriage to share one's hurts, worries, and dreams with another person — a large number of couples fail to find such fulfillment" (p. 140). The findings of the present research seem to suggest that low SES individuals are changing their expectations and needs as far as the marital relationship is concerned. They are beginning to share an increasing amount of intimate detail about themselves. The low SES individuals in the present study appeared to be as desirous of a companionate style of marriage as the high SES subjects of this and others studies.

Sex to Person Differences

It is interesting to note sex differences in target persons as well as types of expressiveness (see Table 5). Males and females are significantly more expressive of love to their space and child than to people. Males



exhibit more expressiveness to spouse than to child, whereas females do not differ significantly in the expression of love between spouse and child. Both sexes are significantly more expressive of happiness to spouse and child than to people.

Negative emotions are also expressed by males and females significantly more often within the family. Males and females are more expressive of anger to spouse than to people or child. Expression of anger between people and child is not significantly different. Sadness is expressed more often to spouse and child than to people and more often to spouse than to child. It seems that females and males prefer to demonstrate negative emotions to their spouse and avoid showing them to their children.

This lack of expression by all groups of negative emotions to children might be explained by a social desirability factor. Individuals may feel that it is socially unacceptable to indicate that one shows anger or sadness to one's children. It may also be that the individuals in this study felt it inappropriate to exhibit or tell their children of their angry or sad feelings. If this is the case, particular note should be taken and further investigation done assessing the consequences of such communication behaviors within the family network.

Conclusions

The results of this research are in partial agreement with the literature concerning emtional expressiveness. Females have traditionally been described as more emotionally expressive than males, and in the present study they did exhibit greater expressiveness in two of the four emotions (happiness and sadness). It seems possible to conclude that the lack of significant differences found in the expressions of love and anger might be due to changes in the American



male, in masculinity and society's views on masculinity. The results of an increasing emphasis put upon communication and sharing, and the male/female liberation movements may be appearing in the alterations of emotional expressiveness demonstrated by males and females.

The literature indicates that individuals from high socioeconomic groups are generally more emotionally expressive than those from low socioeconomic groups. This was found to be true for two emotions (anger and sadness) with the present study, but not for the positive emotions (love and happiness). The conclusions to be drawn from these results again appear to point to a shift in societal expectations and opinions. Low SES individuals and males seem to be adapting to the forces of societal change, thus revealing an alteration in their traditional values, expectations, and viewpoints concerning emotional expressiveness. This apparent societal change can be observed in the testing of hypothesis two.

Although the result of the testing of the third hypothesis was not as expected it was very interesting and exciting. The results from all of the hypotheses appear to demonstrate that some change in communication, self disclosure, and emotional expressivenss expectations is occurring within society, at least within American society. Generally, the low SES persons represented in the present study seemed quite similar to the high SES persons in terms of emotional expressiveness within the family. The low SES individuals were not more emotionally expressive outside of thier families than within. They were significantly more expressive of all emotions within their families than outside. Low SES persons were particularly more expressive to their spouses, suggesting a shift toward a companionate style of marriage rather than the traditional style which has been typical of the lower class.



The second part of hypothesis number three was supported by this research. High SES individuals continued to exhibit significantly greater amounts of emotional expressiveness to family members than to non-family members. This group, like the low SES persons, tended to be more expressive to their spouses (especially of negative emotions—anger and sadness) than to their children. Apparently communication within the marriage relationship is more open, more nonest, and more important than communication between parents and children. This phenomenon has been overlooked in the past research concerning self disclosure and emotional expressiveness. The effects of low expressions of negative emotions to children may reveal important information pertaining to the way in which they are socialized.

Emotional expressiveness seems to involve a number of factors--sex, socioeconomic status, target persons of expressiveness, and types of expressiveness.
Generally, females are more emotionally expressive than males, high socioeconomic persons are more expressive than low socioeconomic persons and both high and low socioeconomic groups are more expressive within their families than outside of their families.



TABLE 1

COMPARISON OF MEANS: MALES AND FEMILES

	Lov	P	Lov	S	Lov	C	Ang	P	Áng	S	Ang	gι
	X	P	X	Р	$\overline{\overline{\mathbf{x}}}$	P	X	P	X	Р	X	Р
Males	8.75	NS	13.56	NS	13.00	NS	8.31	NS	11.35	NS	8.60	NS
Females	9.93		13.95		13.91		8.77		12.02		9.32	
	Sad	P	Sad	s	Sad	С	Нар	Р	Нар	S	Ha _l	o C
	Sad X	P	Sad X	<u>S</u>	Sad	C P	Hap		<u> </u>	S P	Ha _l) C P
Males				P		P		P				Р

TABLE 2

COMPARISON OF MEANS: HIGH AND LOW SES

	Lo	v P	Lov	S	Lov	C	Ang	P	Ang	S	Ang C	;
	$\overline{\mathbf{X}}$	P	X	Р	X	P	X	P	X	P	X	P
Low SES High	9.39	NS	13.68	NS	12.92	NS	7.97	.032	10.92	.024	8.42	NS
SES	9.26	· 	13.80		13.80	•	8.93	*	12.20		9.32	
	Sad	P	Sad	S	Sad	С	Нар	P	Нар	S	Нар	С
	X	P	X	Р	X	P	X	Р	X	P	X	P
Low SES	8.37	NS	11.29	.049	9.19	NS	11.39	NS	15.53	NS	13.32	N:
SES High SES	8.52		12.52		9.96		11.37		14.15		12.67	

TABLE 3
WITHIN GROUP COMPARISONS OF MEANS FOR LOW AND HIGH SES

	LOI	N SES	HIGH SES			
	X	P	X	Р		
ov P	9.39 13.68	.001	9.26 13.80	.001		
.ov P .ov C	9.39 12.92	.001	9.26 13.80	.001		
.ov S .ov C	13.68 12.92	.004	13.80 13.80	NS		
Ang P Ang S	7.97 10.92	.001	8.93 12.20	.001		
Ang P Png C	7.97 8.42	NS	8.93 9.32	NS		
Ang S Ang C	10.92 8.42	.001	12.20 9.32	.001		
Sad P Sad S	8.37 11.29	.001	8.52 12.52	.001		
Sad P Sad C	8.37 9.19	.028	8.52 9.96	.001		
Sad S Sad C	11.29 9.19	.001	12.52 9.96	.001		
Hap P Hap S	11.39 13.53	<u>.001</u>	11.37 14.15	.001		
lap P lap C -	11.39 13.32	.001	11.37 13.67	.001		
lap S lap C	13.53 13.32	NS	14.15 13.67	.017		



TABLE 4
WITHIN GROUP COMPARISONS OF MEANS: SUBGROUPS

	Low SES Females		Low S Male		High S Fema		High SES Males	
	X	Р	X	P	X	Р	X	P
Lov P Lov S	10.16 14.11	.001	8.63 13.26	.001	9.76 13.84	.001	8.83 13.79	.001
Lov P Lov C	10.16 13.58	<u>.001</u>	8.63 12.26	.001	9.76 14.16	.001	8.83 13.48	.001
Lov S Lov C	14.11 13.58	NS	13.26 12.26	.016	13.84 14.16	NS	13.76 13.48	NS
Ang P Ang S	8.32 11.16	.001	7.63 10.68	.001	9.12 12.68	.001	8.76 11.79	.001
Ang P Ang C	8.32 8.63	NS	7.63 8.21	NS	9.12 9.84	NS	8.76 8.86	NS
Ang S Ang C	11.16 8.63	.002	10.68 8.21	.003	12.68 9.84	.001	11.79 8.86	.001
Sad P Sad S	9.05 11.68	.001	7.68 10.90	.001	9.24 12.30	.001	7.90 12.28	.001
Sad P Sad C	9.05 10.00	NS	7.68 8.37	NS	9.24 10.80	.009	7.90 9.24	.004
Sad S Sad C	11.68 10.00	.003	10.90 8.37	.001	12.80 10.80	.003	12.28 9.24	.001
Hap P Hap S	12.53 13.79	.019	10.26 13.26	.001	11.72 13.96	.001	11.07 14.31	.001
Hap P Hap C	12.53 13.90	.001	10.26 12.74	.001	11.72 14.04	.001	11.07 13.50	.001
Hap S Hap C	13.79 13.90	NS	13.26 12.74	NS	13.96 14.04	NS	14.31 13.50	.001



TABLE 5
WITHIN GROUP COMPARISON OF MEANS:
FEMALES AND MALES

	Fe	males	Males			
	X	Р	X	Р		
Lov P Lov S	9.93 13.93	.001	8.75 13.56	.001		
Lov P Lov C	9.93 13.91	.001	8.75 13.00	.001		
Lov S Lov C	13.95 13.91	NS	13.56 13.00	.013		
Ang P Ang S	8.77 12.02	.001	8.31 11.35	.001		
Ang P Ang C	8.77 9.32	NS	8.31 8.60	NS		
Ang S Ang C	12.02 9.32	.001	11.35 8.60	.001		
Sad P Sad S	9.16 12.32	.001	7.81 11.73	.001		
Sad P Sad C	9.16 10.45	.001	7.81 8.90	.003		
Sad S Sad C	12.32 10.45	.001	11.73 8.90	.001		
Hap P Hap S	12.07 13.89	.001	10.75 13.90	.001		
Hap P Hap C	12.07 13.98	.001	10.75 13.10	.00		
Hap S ~ Hap C	13.89 13.98	NS	13.90 13.10	.00		



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APPENDIX



QUESTIONNAIRE

Ins	tructions:	Please answer the space or writing make only one cho Thank you for you	in your answer pice per questi	· Plea	se answei	rāll gu	estions b	ut
1.	Age	The second secon	2. Sex:	Male		Female _		
. 3.	How long ha	ave you been marri	ed?					
4.	How many cl	hildren do you hav	e?					
5.	What is you	ur occupation? _						_
6.	What is the	e last year in sch	ool that you h	ave com	pleted?			_
7.	What is you	ur religious affil	iation?					_
					Seldom		Very	
8.	wnen 1 tee	l angry I tell:	•					
			my spouse					
_			my children					
9.	When I fee	l love I tell:	people			•		
			my spouse	·				
			my children	•		-		
10.	When I fee	l sorrow I tell:	people		-			
			my spouse				•	
			my children					
11.	When I fee	l happy I tell:	people					
			my spouse					
			my children					
12.	When I fee' tell:	l tenderness I	people					
	ceii.		my spouse					
			my children				•	
13.	When I feel	l grief I tell:	people		•			
			my spouse				Armania del Carrio de Carrio de	
			my children					
						· ——-		



			Never	Seldom	0ften	Very Often
14.	When I feel delight I tell:	people		~~~~		-
		my spouse	·····			
		my children			-	
15.	When I feel hate I tell:	people				
		my spouse				
		my children				
16.	When I feel affection I tell:	people				
		my spouse				
		my children				
17.	When I feel resentment I tell:	people				***************************************
		my spouse				
		my children				***************************************
18.	When I feel sad I tell:	people				-
		my spouse				
		my children				
19.	When I feel joy I tell:	people				
		my spouse		*******		
		my children				
20.	When I feel rage [tell:	people				
		my spouse			· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	
		my children				
21.	When I feel warmth I tell:	people				
		my spouse		*****		
		my children				
22.	When I feel blue I tell:	people				
	•	my spouse				
		my children				
23.	When I feel elation I tell:	people				;
		my spouse				
		my children		Mardandono Lugado		

